

Tsylia Aguf's Grandfather Khaim-Duvid Polischuk



My grandfather, my mother's father, Khaim-Duvid Polischuk, in the 1950s. He was visiting his son in Novograd-Volynskiy and was photographed by an amateur photographer. My grandfather was born in Radomyshl in 1879. He finished cheder and a Jewish school in there. He was a timber dealer. He was a very religious man. He prayed, observed all Jewish traditions and celebrated holidays. Ukrainians liked my grandfather. They asked his advice in family disputes and educational issues like where to get a teacher for a child. Those who were illiterate often asked my grandfather to read letters for them and my grandfather always supported them. He was a very kind and wise man. In 1918-1919, during the many pogroms in Jewish neighborhoods of Ukrainian

towns, Ukrainian men guarded my grandfather's home and rescued him from bandits more than once. After the Revolution of 1917 my grandfather became the supervisor of a timber agency. He wasn't very enthusiastic about the revolutionary ideas of fraternity and equality of all people. He didn't become an atheist, either. My grandmother, on the other hand, was inspired by Lenin's idea of universal wealth that was about to come. She read Lenin's books in Russian. My grandparents, together with my mother and sisters, were in evacuation in Kuibyshev during the Great Patriotic War. I have no information about their life there because I had left without even saying goodbye to them. Throughout the war we didn't hear from them and didn't know whether they were alive. Only after I returned to Kiev in 1945, we received a letter from my mother. It arrived at the hostel where I had lived before the war. My acquaintances, whom I met by chance, gave it to me. The letter said that they were alive, that everything was all right with them but that they weren't going to return to Kiev. My mother, my sisters and my grandparents stayed in Kuibyshev after the war. My grandmother died of pneumonia in the late 1950s, and my grandfather passed away in 1960. They were buried in the town cemetery - there was no Jewish cemetery in Kuibyshev. I didn't go to the funeral. My mother and sisters notified me in a letter. I don't know if my grandparents observed traditions after the war. My mother and sisters didn't write anything about it in their letters.